

T H E  
**Christian History ;**

Containing Accounts of the Propagation and Revival  
of Religion in *Great Britain, America, &c.*

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Saturday APRIL 7. 1744. § N<sup>o</sup>. 58.

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*Revival of Religion in the first Precinct of GLOCESTER  
in the County of ESSEX, about thirty Miles North  
easterly of Boston ; in a Letter from the Rev. Mr.  
WHITE Pastor of the Church there, to the Rev.  
Mr. PRINCE of Boston.*

*Glocester, March 1744.*

Reverend Sir,

**B**EING moved to give some Account of the Work of  
GOD among us, take it as follows.

*Glocester* (commonly called *Cape-Ann*,) was small  
in it's Beginning, yet of late has greatly increased. When  
I the Subscriber was settled in the Ministry here, *more than  
forty-one Years ago*, there was but *one Congregation*; and about  
*Threescore and eight Members*, and of these *twenty-one Males*.  
And the Materials of *three Churches* have been dismissed from  
us, in order to be incorporated and settled in Gospel-Order :  
To the last, which is now the *fourth Church* in this Town, were  
dismissed from us upwards of *Fourscore Males and Females*.  
And there now remain about *Fourscore Males*, and an *Hundred  
and eighty Females*.

I have not ordinarily fished for Souls with a *Net*, but with  
an *Angling-Rod*. GOD the HOLY GHOST has been pleas-  
ed in a more gentle and undiscernable Way to work Faith in  
the Hearts of our People ; and they came in one after ano-  
ther, not in Troops, or Clusters : except at *two Seasons*, viz.  
after the *Earthquake*, and about *two Years ago*. Our People  
by the *Earthquakes* were (as their Neighbours) greatly affright-  
ed ; especially the more Rude, Ignorant and Wicked among  
us. But about a Month after the first Shocks, when their  
terrifying

terrifying Frights were over ; it pleased GOD by his SPIRIT to work kindly in a Way of *Conviction*, and I trust of *Conversion*. And there was a great Harvest of Souls gathered in to CHRIST in a Way of open *Profession* ; and if we may judge by their after Conversation, most of them were sincere : which brought to Mind what is written, 1 Kings 19. 11, 12. *And he said go forth & stand upon the Mount before the LORD : and behold the LORD passed by, and a great strong Wind rent the Mountains ; but the LORD was not in the Wind ; and after the Wind, an Earthquake ; but the LORD was not in the Earthquake : And after the Earthquake a Fire ; but the LORD was not in the Fire : And after the Fire, a still small Voice.* And this Voice, this still small Voice was heard by many : and the powerful Voice of the HOLY GHOST was effectual for the saving *Conversion* of Scores of Souls, according to the Judgment of rational Charity.

Upon what I heard of GOD's marvellous Works of Grace at *Northampton*, and especially upon reading the surprizing and affecting Account thereof, drawn up by their Reverend Pastor : I had at Times sincere, sensible and fervent Desires, that the GOD of all Grace, would visit us with the like plentiful Effusions of his holy, promised SPIRIT : And was wont in publick Addresses to the Prayer hearing GOD, to ask the Gift of Gifts, the HOLY SPIRIT. Knowing that *Application-Work* in the *Conviction* and *Conversion* of Sinners would be carried on among a gospelized People, more or less as the SPIRIT from on High should be in lesser or greater Degrees poured down upon them. And I looked upon it as a farther Ground of Encouragement to wait upon GOD, that he had so remarkably added to the *Promises* under the Old and New Testament, his *Performance* ; as in *Hampshire County*. And at Length I moved the Church to set apart a *Day of Fasting and Prayer*, to wait upon GOD for this Blessing ; viz. that the Dews and Showers of the HOLY GHOST might fall upon us : And GOD did speedily and plentifully answer our Prayers. Of this wonderful Work of GOD I have given the Public an Account in an *Epistle* prefixed to a *Sermon* preached by the Rev. Mr. Benjamin Bradstreet on this joyful Occasion ; to which I refer the Reader.

*The said Account we have thought proper to intersept as follows,*

“ There

“ There have been unhappy Controversies carried on  
 “ with too much of Heat relating to the *good Work* in this  
 “ and the neighbouring *Provinces* and *Colonies*. Some as-  
 “ cribing the whole to the *Devil*. But how can we account  
 “ for the Reconciliation of Persons for a long Time at En-  
 “ mity, the Reformation of profligate Wretches, their deep  
 “ Humiliation, their Illumination, and sound Conversion,  
 “ as the Effect of Satan’s Operations? Surely ’tis a new  
 “ Work for Satan to wound, and heal the Conscience, to  
 “ fill the Souls of Men with Love to God and Christ; and  
 “ their Mouths with Praises to their faithful Creator, and  
 “ dear Redeemer; and bring them to take inexpressible De-  
 “ light in the Ways of God. Others on the contrary as-  
 “ cribing all the Work done among us to God; some of  
 “ which are so new, strange, violent, that ’tis hard to con-  
 “ ceive they are the Effect of the HOLY SPIRIT’S Operati-  
 “ ons. I think we may allow some of them to be the natural  
 “ Effects of human Frailty. And if some be allowed to be  
 “ the Effects of an enraged Devil, I think it no unreason-  
 “ able Concession. We in the first Parish in *Glocester* were  
 “ so desirous of this Work, as to keep a Day of Fasting and  
 “ Prayer; to ask of God the Blessing of Blessings, the Gift  
 “ of the HOLY GHOST: and invited the rest of the Pastors  
 “ of the Town with the Rev. Mr. *Nathaniel Rogers* to assist  
 “ in the Work of the Day. And it was not long after, that  
 “ we found the good Effects of waiting upon God. Can  
 “ any think it possible that when we go to our heavenly Fa-  
 “ ther and ask a Fish, that he will give a Serpent? ’Tis  
 “ strange, if immediately upon our asking the saving Impres-  
 “ sions of the HOLY GHOST; GOD should take that Op-  
 “ portunity to send, or permit the Devil to come among us  
 “ with his undoing Delusions. But the first most visible and  
 “ powerful Effusion of the Spirit was on the last Sabbath in  
 “ *January*, [1741, 2.] and especially as I was preaching in the  
 “ Afternoon & on the Evening in two religious Societies in the  
 “ Harbour; many were impressed both with Distress & with  
 “ Joy, above Measure. And on Monday Morning in the  
 “ School of Mr. *Moses Parsons*; a Man disposed zealously  
 “ to serve the best Interests of all he has to do with: And  
 “ being hired by a Number of Gentlemen, to train up their  
 “ Children in religious Exercises, and in Singing as well as  
 “ other useful Knowledge; the Spirit of GOD came so power-  
 “ fully,

“ fully upon the School, so that they could not attend the  
 “ ordinary School Exercises. But with their joyful Master  
 (with whom I had left the Care of my Flock while I went a  
 “ Journey, which I was necessitated to take) and a Multitude  
 “ of Spectators, they prayed to, and praised God by singing  
 “ spiritual Hymns. And in the Evening Mr. *Parsons*  
 “ preached a Lecture in the Meeting House; and in the  
 “ Close of the Exercise, the Spirit fell upon a great Part of  
 “ the Congregation to the Amazement of many: and Peo-  
 “ ple had such an Appetite to the Word preached, that Mr.  
 “ *Parsons* called in the Help of the other Ministers of the  
 “ Town; and on Tuesday Evening the Rev. Mr. *Jaques*  
 “ (a faithful and successful Preacher) preached: and on  
 “ Wednesday Evening the Rev. Mr. *Bradstreet* preached  
 “ the Sermon now put into your Hands. Several of the  
 “ Hearers desired a Copy of it for the Press. And several  
 “ Evening Sermons were preached after this. And the good  
 “ Fruits of this Visit are very apparent; no less than twenty  
 “ one had their Experiences read the last Sabbath Day.

[ Thus far the printed Account. ]

Now I shall proceed to relate as briefly as I can the EF-  
 FECTS. *As they were all amazed, saying in their Hearts, and*  
*one to another, What meaneth this?* My Eyes never saw such  
 Transactions; my Ears never heard such Expressions: And  
 thus it was when the HOLY SPIRIT was poured down, *Acts*  
*2. 2. And suddenly there came a Sound from Heaven, as of a*  
*rustling Wind, and it filled the House where they were sitting.*  
 And thus it was with us. But the Impression was at first  
 principally on the one Side of the Meeting-House. And  
 there was poured down a Spirit of Prayer upon Young and  
 Old, especially the younger Sort. (And Children of five, six,  
 seven Years, and upward, would pray to Admiration.) And in  
 our Parish, there have since been formed no less than nine distinct  
 Societies, of Young and Old, Male and Female, Bond and Free,  
 (for one of them is a Society of Negroes, who in their Meetings  
 behave very seriously & decently. They have been greatly im-  
 pressed. One of them gave a very satisfying Account of his  
 Experiences, and was taken into Church-Fellowship: Most of  
 them entered into Covenant, and were baptized themselves,  
 and also their Issue) who meet several of them twice in a  
 Week, to pray and sing, as well as to read Books of Piety, and the

the rest once a *Week*. And the Younger say their *Catechism* to the Head of the Meeting. And several Sermons have been preached unto them.

But another EFFECT is a *Spirit of Grace*. The Work of *Conversion* has been carried on in uncommon Manner. But as to the *Degree* and *Duration* of *Terrors*, there has been a vast Variety. Some have been impressed with deep *Terrors*, and have continued for *several Months* under them. They have been greatly distressed, and near to *Distraction*. They have had such Discoveries of the Greatness of their Guilt, and of GOD's Anger, of the Badness of their Hearts, as to make them cry out. They have had Discoveries of their Ignorance and Unbelief, of their Hardness of Heart, and Enmity against GOD. They have seen not only an utter *Inability* to believe, but an *Aversion* to believe. And when it was GOD's Time to comfort and heal their wounded Hearts and Spirits, their Joys rose proportionably to their Depression, and their Lifting-up was in Proportion to their Dejection. And many a Time have they been so full of spiritual Joys, as to sink and faint under the Weight of them. Others have been but a *short Time* under a *Law-Work*, and then there have succeeded Joys, under the Sense that their Sins are pardoned. But of this Sort, their religious Impressions, I fear, have too soon wore off. And many moved towards Church-Fellowship, and joined to the Church: But some have sadly apostatized, and are become as vile, yea, more vile than before. We find that strong but short *Terrors*, succeeded with ravishing Joys, are no certain Evidence of saving *Conversion*.

There has been an apparent Reformation. Diversions, tho' lawful and innocent, have been almost wholly laid aside, and the singing of Dr. WATTS's *Hymns* is the chief Recreation of Christians when they convene. There are no *Seperations* among us. Little has been said about *New Lights*, (which I look upon as a *Term of Reproach*, as of old the Term *Puritan* was) and as little about *Opposers*; The mentioning of which is irritating, and tends to widen the Breach; and foment Divisions, Contentions and *Seperations*. As to *Visions* we had enough of them, until such Time as in a Lecture Sermon I declared my Sentiments concerning them; and so far as I can understand, there has never been one since. Our Congregation has been disturbed and interrupted by *Outcries*, but I laboured to suppress them.



I would add ; that as I believe there have been *Scores* savingly wrought upon, who were Strangers before that happy Day, so much as to the Form of Godliness : So *some Professors* who rested in the *Form*, and were but *Legalists* or *Self-righteous*, have seen that they built upon a sandy Foundation ; and were greatly distressed under the Conviction ; and by an earnest Application unto CHRIST for Wisdom and Righteousness, have had a further Discovery of JESUS CHRIST ; and have been encouraged to venture upon him for the complete Salvation of their Souls ; and have had their Hearts filled with Joy in Believing. So also, there have been *Scores* of Persons who *had truly closed* with CHRIST in Time past ; but have walked in Darkness, by Means of the Withdraw of the SPIRIT, the Weakness of their Graces, and Prevalency of their Corruptions ; and have been for a long Time as in a Wilderness : These have been anointed as with fresh Oil ; their Hearts have been made glad, enlarged, quickened, and comforted by renewed and continued Supplies of Grace, have been enabled with enlarged Hearts to run the Ways of God's Commandments.

One Thing more I see Cause to add ; that altho' properly speaking, we have had *but one Itinerant Preacher* with us : Yet several eminently able and zealous Servants of the Lord, *settled Ministers*, have occasionally preached to our Congregation ; and have been greatly assisting in promoting this good Work. God has blessed their Labours among us. And it is my hearty Desire, that the Kingdom and Interest of our LORD may be promoted, and Converts multiplied, although by other Hands.

Thus I have made an impartial Relation of what God has done amongst us, in the Methods of his Grace : And to Him be the Glory, who is the Author of Grace, and not to the Instruments. Suppose a PAUL may plant, and an APOLLOS water, yet 'tis GOD that gives the Increase. To Him therefore be Glory in the Church by CHRIST JESUS throughout all Ages, World without End, AMEN.

Your most obliged humble Servant,

JOHN WHITE.

*The*

*The following is an Extract from a Pamphlet, printed in London once in seven Weeks, Intituled, An Account of the most remarkable Particulars relating to the present Progress of the Gospel.*

*From a Country Minister, to the Publisher.*

*My dear Friend,*

*Octob. 27. 1743.*

**I**N Compliance with your repeated Desires, I now sit down to write to you. I often find a Backwardness to Works of this Nature, yet my Soul has, before I have done, been sweetly refreshed. O may it be so now ! And may you be also favoured with the like refreshing Gales of the HOLY SPIRIT, in reading what may be here communicated in much *Creature-Weakness* and Imperfection, being what attends me in all I do.

As to the *present State of my own Soul*, I am seldom favour'd with any rapturous Enjoyment, but a gradual Increase of Hungerings and Thirstings ; and sometimes, ere I am aware, my Soul is made like the Chariots of *Aminadab*. I think from my first Experience of the Grace of GOD, I have been favoured with a gradual, altho' slow Growth. Blessed be GOD, I have great Reason to glory in the Cross of CHRIST and its blessed Effects upon my old Man. By a long Train of Experiences, the LORD has given me great Discoveries of the Deceitfulness, and desperate Wickedness of my own Heart, the alluring Vanities of an ensnaring *World*, and the Power and Policy of my Adversary the *Devil* at the Head of all the Principalities and Powers of Darkness. And must a vile sinful Wretch, a poor weak little Child be made victorious over all these Soul-Enemies, who have kill'd their Thousands and ten Thousands of precious Souls, and daily are executing their Soul-murdering Projects on my dear Fellow-Creatures round about me ? O why, why was I a Brand pluck'd out of the Burning ? O free, distinguishing, and sovereign Grace ! An amazing and everlasting Wonder !

*My Lord, my Conqu'ror, and my King,  
Thy Scepter and thy Sword I sing ;  
Thine is the Vict'ry, and I sit,  
A joyful Subject at thy Feet.*

I have mournful Experience of the Remains of *indwelling Sin*; and am also, I think, not a Day free from the Assaults of the *old Serpent*: But this, I suppose, is permitted to keep me humble and watchful, that I may continually loath and abhor my self; also to prevent spiritual Pride, and that my dear SAVIOUR may in my Sight wear the Crown of Victory. I have not had any distressing Fears about the eternal State of my Soul many Years: And now, blessed be God, I have a joyful Prospect of living and reigning with CHRIST upon Earth, over the Flesh, World, and Devil. O help me to

*Praise God; from whom all Blessings flow, &c.*

As to my *Labours in the Vineyard*; although the Devil opposes me by all the Arts he can use, which I must expect, yet my dear LORD encourages me: He gives me Ability and Opportunity sometimes to *preach every Day*, and *statedly three Times on a Lord's-Day*; and the more I Labour the more I enjoy; and the more Power I have from GOD in my Work; and also the greater Success, as appears in the thirsting Desires of many after the Word of Life; and likewise in the Complaints of precious Souls wounded under the Word, and seeking for Healing. O what, what a blessed Master is JESUS CHRIST! What sweet inward Peace and Joy of Soul am I favoured with when I *travel fifty or sixty Miles in a Week*, and *preach once or twice every Day*; and when I work but little, I enjoy but little; by which I am taught, that this is not a State of Enjoyment, but of Employment. Here we must work and suffer for CHRIST. Heaven is the Saints everlasting Rest and Enjoyment. The Cordials given us in the Way are for our Support and Encouragement, and to discover to us the Nature of the Saints Portion after Death; also to increase our Hungrings and Thirstings, &c. and Meetness for Glory.

Blessed be GOD, I trust that he has quite freed me from the Shackles of *Bigotry* and *Party Causes*, yet hope I have a more firm Regard than ever to every Part of Divine Truth. Your printed Letters are refreshing to my Soul; the good LORD make them so to all that read them. Blessed be GOD for the publishing these Accounts!

*(The Remainder in our next.)*